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**HOLDING POPULAR SUPPORT AND BUYING TIME - WHY ISAF MUST  
ASSUME THE LEAD FROM USAID IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS AND  
NGOS IN MAJOR RECONSTRUCTION IN THE CONTESTED AREAS OF  
AFGHANISTAN.**

**by**

**Chris R. Toner**

**COL, U.S. Army**

**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily  
endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**31 October 2008**

## **Abstract**

*Holding popular support and buying time - Why ISAF must assume the lead from USAID implementing partners and NGOs in major reconstruction in the contested areas of Afghanistan.*

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) implementing partners and Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs) are looked to by the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) for major reconstruction in Afghanistan. They are ineffective however, because security conditions keep them out of many areas. As a result, ISAF must assume the lead in reconstruction in these areas. This paper discusses how security impacts reconstruction and the correlation of reconstruction to security. It discusses why it is important to transform the environment beyond simple construction and how this has proven successful in increasing the security, economy, and popular support of the Afghan people. Finally, it concludes that ISAF must assume the lead role in reconstruction in the high threat areas where civilian aid workers do not operate and offers recommendations to achieve this goal.

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*“Many stability operations are best performed by indigenous, foreign, or U.S. civilian professionals. Nonetheless, U.S. Military forces shall be prepared to perform all tasks necessary to establish or maintain order when civilians cannot do so.”<sup>1</sup>*

## **Introduction.**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) implementing partners and Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs) are looked to by the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) for major reconstruction in Afghanistan. They are ineffective however, because security conditions keep them out of many areas. Because USAID implementing partners and NGOs ineffectively operate in a significant part of Afghanistan, ISAF must assume the lead in reconstruction in these areas. ISAF cannot afford to wait until the security environment improves to the point when USAID and NGOs can enter in full force to accomplish major reconstruction. Every lost day jeopardizes the support of the Afghan population for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA).

The Counter Insurgency (COIN) strategy in Afghanistan has correctly identified the legitimacy of the GIRoA and the support of the population as the two key centers of gravity. The development of any fledgling government requires an inordinate amount of time that often supports the insurgent vice counterinsurgent side of protracted warfare. The population, waiting for their government to provide them with a better way of life, find themselves disenchanted with the struggling government process. Consequently, they gravitate towards the insurgent who reinforces cultural/religious values and offers immediate security.

ISAF maintains the ability to operate anywhere in Afghanistan but lacks the technical expertise and resources to assume the lead for major reconstruction. With minor structural changes and outsourcing of expertise ISAF forces can create the capability to assume the

reconstruction mission. This will help to maintain popular support and buy the time necessary for the GIRoA and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to mature.

This paper will not discuss the broad application of COIN in Afghanistan. It will discuss how security impacts reconstruction and the correlation of reconstruction to security. It will identify the major projects that need to be the focus of reconstruction, and the roles and responsibilities of the reconstruction players. It discusses why it is important to transform the environment beyond simple construction and how this has proven successful in increasing the security, economy, and popular support of the Afghan people. Finally, it concludes that ISAF must assume the lead role in reconstruction in the high threat areas.

#### **Discussion / Analysis.**

The current ISAF COIN strategy in Afghanistan is based on a “shape, clear, hold and build strategy.” Military forces shape the conditions of the security environment, clear areas of insurgents, hold with the enduring presence of ANSF, and set the conditions to build through enabling the extension of viable governance and development. This strategy focuses on meeting the basic needs of the people.”<sup>2</sup> During the build portion the aim is to transform the environment so that the insurgents no longer have the support of the population. This transformation is accomplished by establishing the GIRoA and ANSF in the area and using reconstruction to both meet the immediate and long term needs of the people.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Security Challenges.**

Despite many positive developments in Afghanistan, security challenges adversely affect development in the areas of health, education, roads, power, and water. In the South and the Eastern areas the insurgents challenge the control of the GIRoA.<sup>4</sup> NGOs and civilian reconstruction firms make employment decisions based on how the United Nations (UN)

classifies the security situation in each province. They choose not to operate in the high threat areas. For example in 2007 the UN classified half of Afghanistan too dangerous for aid workers.<sup>5</sup> High threat areas can be seen in the map below.

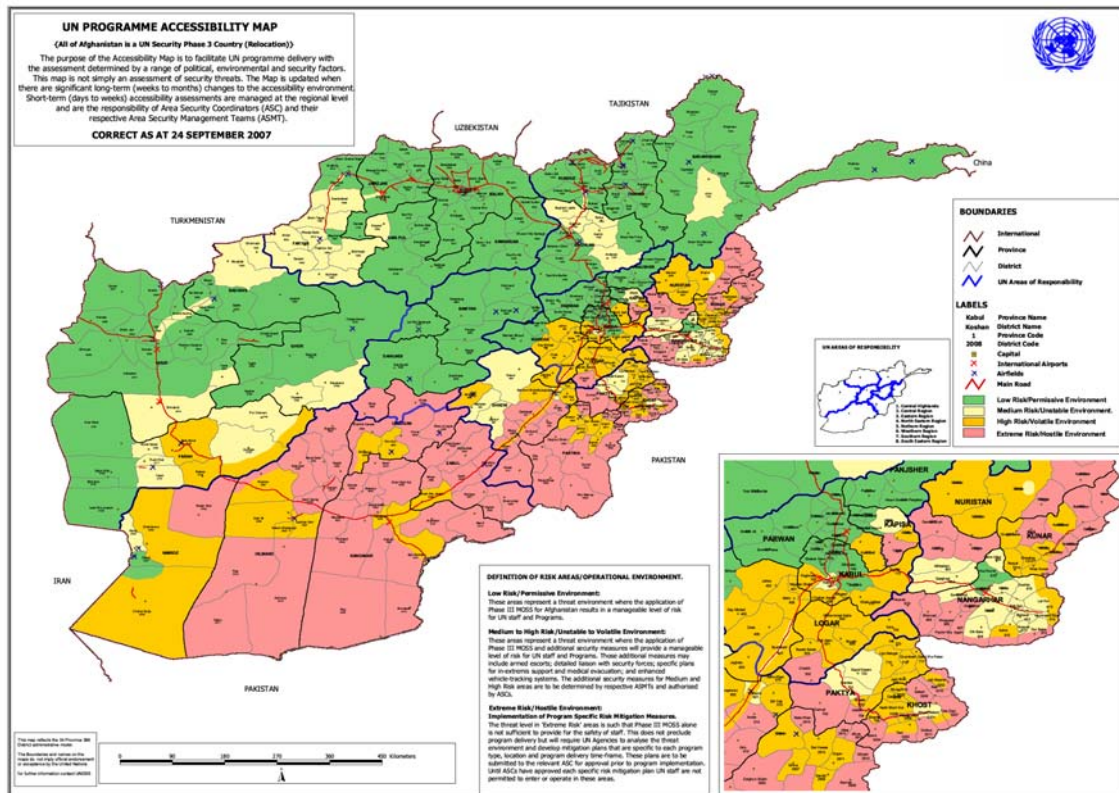


Figure 1 depicts the high threat areas in orange and red.<sup>6</sup>

Complicating security in Afghanistan is the existence of an insurgent sanctuary in the Pakistan

Especially important is the fact that the tribe does not recognize the existing Afghan-Pakistan border and continue to maintain and conduct cross border tribal affairs.



Figure 2 – Area dominated by the Pashtun Tribe depicted in purple<sup>7</sup>

The Pashtuns that live near the border find themselves caught between loyalty to the GIROA and to their tribe. Daily pressures are exerted on them as they encounter Pashtun insurgents operating in these areas. By tribal code, called Pashtunwali, they are obligated to provide these insurgents with aid and comfort.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the lure of Pakistan based Madrassas to Afghan families is persuasive enough to continue the draw of Afghan youth as students. Pashtun families in Afghanistan are presented with the opportunity to send their sons to a fully sponsored Islamic school where they are fed, housed, and educated. The opportunity for a fully funded education is a compelling offer to a poor family. This



recruitment sustains the fodder of young military men who are educated in the Pakistan Madrassas, recruited by militant insurgent groups, trained, and subsequently enter the insurgency as home grown fighters. Family ties to these returning youth support efforts on the side of the insurgency.

### **The economy and the Big Four reconstruction projects.**

Afghanistan's economy continues to grow slowly but it is a growth mostly confined to the major urban areas.<sup>9</sup> According to ISAF Gross Domestic Product has doubled since 2003 and increased in 2007 by 13%.<sup>10</sup> Afghanistan, however, still remains dependent on foreign aid.<sup>11</sup> Food and fuel dominate requirements and prices, along with inflation, continue to rise.<sup>12</sup> Some of the key issues negatively impacting economic growth are: security, the lack of roads, power, water access for agriculture, and education.<sup>13</sup> These areas have become the focus of reconstruction efforts by the international community.<sup>14</sup> Because of their economic importance, roads, power, water access for agriculture, and education comprise the “Big Four” reconstruction projects.

Roads facilitate movement for trade, medical support, NGO activities, and link the rural areas to the urban areas. Ultimately they improve security. Weather severely impacts the majority of roads in Afghanistan because they are non-paved and generally follow stream beds in valley floors. Some key roads are impassable during the winter, spring and early fall due to snow and rain. When ISAF or international agencies improve (gravel improvement) existing roads their lifespan is generally 6-11 months or about one winter.<sup>15</sup>

The GIRoA, along with international contributors and ISAF have made road development a top priority and rely on civilian expertise and organizations to build paved roads. The lack of security has delayed some road projects and resulted in increased costs.

For example, the goal to complete Afghanistan's regional highway network (connecting several major cities and in some cases to neighboring countries) by the end of 2008 is expected to fall short by 40%.<sup>16</sup> In another example, "USAID signed a contract for about \$8 million to construct the Kajaki road in May 2007. This road is important as it connects the Kajaki dam, a source of water and power in southern Afghanistan, to the ring road. However, because attacks prevented contractors from working on the project, it was terminated in 2008 after USAID had spent about \$5 million."<sup>17</sup>

The electrical power system in Afghanistan provides less than 10% of the population with intermittent power.<sup>18</sup> This system, archaic by any standard before the Soviet invasion, was almost completely destroyed after the Soviets withdrew during the subsequent civil war. Power system reconstruction has been slow in development and the lack of a durable power system negatively affects the economic development of the country.<sup>19</sup>

The development of a national power system takes time and should be designed to take advantage of internal capabilities with supplementation through regional initiatives. Although progress continues towards leveraging regional power systems like power initiatives with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the development of internal capabilities remains deficient. "In 2001, Afghanistan produced 430 Megawatts of electricity; in 2008 the country [only] produces 754 megawatts."<sup>20</sup>

Afghanistan has enormous potential in the field of agriculture and this sector accounts for almost 45% of the national GDP. The capability exists to transform this sector from a subsistence based economy to a regional exportation economy. The primary issue confronting agriculture capability is the lack of water.<sup>21</sup> Only about 30% of the country's

available water resources are currently being used, and at low efficiency and productivity.”<sup>22</sup> The majority of farmers are dependent on snow melt and rain fall to irrigate their farms.<sup>23</sup>

Afghanistan has more than 5.7 million students in school.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, over half of Afghan children are still out of school. Of the 30,000 to 40,000 yearly high school graduates only about one-third enter college -- the rest remain unemployed.<sup>25</sup> In the last seven years, more than 3,500 schools have been built but thousands of Afghan children still travel to Pakistan for madrassa based education.<sup>26</sup> According to the Afghan Minister of Education, Mr. Hanif Atmar, “In Pakistan there are around 15,000 madrassas, and around 1.5 million students enrolled there. If we invest adequately, and according to the policy of the government, in our madrassas system, to a large extent those Afghans who are now being taught in madrassas across the border will come back to their own country.”<sup>27</sup> Afghan parents are sending their sons to the Pakistani madrassas because they offer fully funded religious training.<sup>28</sup> Afghan President Karzai recently announced that the building of Afghan based madrassas, to combat the Pakistan based system, is a top priority for the Afghan government.<sup>29</sup>

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the key reconstruction players.**

The GIRoA is finally taking the responsibility to plan and coordinate the economic development plan for the country. In 2007, initial Provincial Development plans were developed and fed upward into an Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). This effectively created a master plan for the integrated development of key economic infrastructures. The Big Four: roads, power, agriculture irrigation, and education are all a part of this plan.<sup>30</sup> Province level government leaders work closely with the military to develop reconstruction plans that take advantage of the various monies provided by the Afghan

government, ISAF members, USAID, NGOs, and private donors. Each province Governor works side by side with military leaders and is the direct conduit to Afghan parliament ministers and the President of Afghanistan.

The military role in Afghanistan is to extend the reach of the GIRoA and create the conditions for reconstruction and development. The military gains and maintains the separation of the enemy from the population to establish the security conditions that will allow USAID and NGOs to enter and transform the environment through reconstruction. The military is not prevented from conducting reconstruction especially with respect to meeting the basic needs of the people. Military construction of improved roads has had a direct and positive impact to the local economy. Additionally, the military has funded, contracted, and overseen the building of numerous quick impact projects such as clinics, irrigation systems, schools, governance centers, and other cultural projects.<sup>31</sup> Military engineers contribute to reconstruction through the improvement of existing primitive roads in support of military movement requirements. The military is fully capable of operating in the high threat areas of Afghanistan as they maintain the ability to secure themselves. They lack, however, the technical capability to build paved roads, power generation systems, major irrigation projects, and large vertical projects (such as schools). With civilian augmentation and specialized equipment they could accomplish these tasks.

Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) were first employed in Afghanistan in 2002. They are composed of both military and civilian members and tasked to facilitate provincial reconstruction, governance, and security. The PRT leadership works with the maneuver force commanders and Afghan government leaders to identify reconstruction projects. The PRTs have the ability to coordinate the efforts of the military, USAID and NGOs for reconstruction

projects. The PRTs also leverage the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) which provides monies for immediate needs projects. This allows the PRTs to work with the local Afghan government to identify projects and then identify a local Afghan contractor to complete the work. The PRT has become the central location for the planning, contracting, and supervision of the provincial development plan.<sup>32</sup> The PRT organizational structure calls for two key civilian staff members – a Department of State (DOS) field officer and a USAID field officer. The USAID officer is critically important as they are the conduit to the NGOs and other international organizations that bring capability and monies for reconstruction.

USAID works to create economic growth, governance, and to eliminate the conditions that produce extremism.<sup>33</sup> USAID field officers monitor reconstruction and development efforts and implement PRT-specific programming.<sup>34</sup> They have made road construction and irrigation improvements the priority effort. USAID accomplishes their reconstruction projects through the use of implementing partners. These civilian organizations provide the expertise needed to plan, coordinate, and build each project. Implementing partner's rely on local Afghan police forces to provide the security required for their construction area. Occasionally they are allowed to hire local civilian security forces. These security forces maintain the capability to operate in low threat areas but are not robust enough to provide security in the high threat areas.

“Vital to the success or failure” of reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan “will be the role played by the major implementing partners of the UN and of major donors who will actually implement projects in the field – the NGOs.”<sup>35</sup> Funded by the UN, governments or by privately raised resources, NGOs have played an important role in development in Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup> NGOs are involved in a multitude of efforts including secondary road

construction, agricultural, health, and education programs.<sup>37</sup> In Afghanistan NGO freedom of movement is limited due to the security situation (see figure 1 on page 3).

### **Personal experience.**

I served from January 2006 to May 2007 as a Task Force Commander in Paktika Province, Afghanistan.<sup>38</sup> I had the opportunity to employ our COIN strategy and firmly believe it is a strategy that will ultimately be successful. Even though we became involved in a significant surge of kinetic activity our command briefing catch phrase emphasized the importance of reconstruction on the COIN fight: “Projects are our best weapon system.” There was no doubt that we could separate the enemy from the population but the most important aspect was to maintain that separation, support the establishment of the GIRoA and ANSF into the area, and then to transform the environment through reconstruction.

Clearly understood in our COIN strategy is that there is no military solution. We saw the effects projects had within the province both in terms of security and increased support from the population. Especially important was the effect – just knowing they were going to get a project had desired effects as it reinforced the “hope in the future” aspect. We had the ability to infuse the province with numerous quick impact projects along the lines of clinics, irrigation, schools, governance centers, mosque refurbishment, and humanitarian assistance. Prior to our tour (pre 2006) \$6.5 million had been spent on quick impact projects and humanitarian assistance. Through our 16 month tour in conjunction with the PRT (and very limited USAID support),<sup>39</sup> we spent or obligated monies totaling over \$90 million. Of these funds, \$18 million was obligated for the first paved road that would link the capital of Sharona to the major economic village of Orgune.<sup>40</sup> What we lacked was the ability to plan,

contract, and construct province wide paved roads, power systems, reservoirs, canals, and large schools that would compete with the Pakistan madrassas.

A great frustration was with the lack of long term reconstruction planning and our ability to attract the major reconstruction projects that would ultimately transform the province. Because of the perceived security situation in the province USAID could not contract the civilian implementing partners needed to complete major reconstruction. We did have some NGO activity that was confined to small projects but they refused to commit to major reconstruction along the lines of the Big Four.

My experience with the improvement and construction of the road systems was that roads not only caused a significant increase in the economy but also measurably increased the security in the area. Roads were a topic of discussion in every shura meeting my commanders and I held. These were gravel improved roads that used the existing primitive road network, normally along a stream bed, and were constructed by the U.S. combat engineer task force.

Even smaller road based projects focused at village business centers had significant economic impacts. In these cases we would construct cobblestone roads through the village bazaar area, hiring local workers to complete the project, and complimenting them with ten year maintenance free solar street lights. This infused monies into the local economy, improved the capacity of the bazaar area, and the solar street lights lengthened the business day past sundown. These were hugely successful and resulted in enormous economic growth.

In the fall of 2006, as several of the roads began to deteriorate, I was repeatedly asked why we weren't building paved roads. To be effective these paved roads needed to be built

into the high ground out of the flood range – which was certainly outside the organic capability of our US combat engineers. In meetings with tribal elders along the Pakistan border, the trafficability of the interior Afghan roads was even more important. They confided to me that it was easier to go to Pakistan for medical aid and business because the road system was better and they could get there and back to their homes quicker. Clearly this was an indicator that the “transformed” environment still remained on the Pakistan side of the border. In my 16 months in rural Afghanistan, roads were the number one requested project followed by irrigation, power, and education.

Paktika province and the majority of Afghanistan are agricultural based societies. Farming is subsistence based designed to bring the food to the table or to the village bazaar. Afghanistan’s hope for the future partly lies in its ability to transform from a family based agricultural system to a system that could export agricultural products to neighboring countries. What I observed was that wherever the Afghan’s could move water they could grow a crop of their choosing. The challenge was in their ability to move the water from existing streams and rivers to the land they wished to cultivate. Agricultural productivity is totally dependent on annual snow and rain fall – they have no reservoir/canal system that can store and transport water. Drought and the lack of a formal irrigation system significantly impacted the growing season and productivity.

Power generation was completely confined to fuel based generators. Even the provincial capital city of Sharona lacked power generation outside of personally owned generators. With no plan to establish a link to a power grid or to build hydro electric or wind/solar based power systems the province is way behind in obtaining this capability.



Lethal operations were predominately confined to the border area. As we developed our intelligence from captured insurgents and material we identified that the majority of the low level fighters were provided from a series of Pakistani based madrassas. Afghan leaders confided that the insurgents were recruiting their sons into the Pakistan madrassas with the offer of a fully funded education (room and board). This was extremely inviting to any Afghan family as it provided a golden opportunity to get their son a free education. In addition, what was often promised was the opportunity for the son to remain in Pakistan and be employed in the local economy where they could earn a significantly larger income and could then supplement the family income. The dilemma we faced was how to stop the sons of Afghanistan from continuing to be drawn into the insurgency in the madrassas in Pakistan. During discussions with the Paktika Governor we determined that the best method to combat the Pakistan based madrassas was to create the same educational capability on our side of the border. This would require large schools that could operate year around, provide a fully funded education program, and have some sort of link to college entrance and/or job placement. Clearly this required major reconstruction capabilities and a National level plan to fully implement. Towards the end of 2006 we reached a point where quick impact projects had reached their potential in the province. In discussions with the Provincial Governor and tribal elders it became clear that the people wanted more progress along the lines of Big Four projects.

### **Conclusions.**

Although reconstruction efforts are only a piece of the COIN strategy in Afghanistan, they are absolutely critical. After seven years of Coalition military, USAID, and NGO efforts the country has been saturated with schools, clinics, wells, district centers, and other quick

impact projects that no longer meet the needs of the people. Only major reconstruction, along the lines of the Big Four projects, can serve to give hope to the people for a better future.

The majority of the major reconstruction to date has been implemented in permissive areas, predominately urban areas, at expense to the rural population. This rural population is dominated by the Pashtun tribe, the largest tribe in Afghanistan. The Pashtun's have played a major role in governance throughout the history of Afghanistan and the tribe occupies a majority of the sanctuary area of Pakistan. As long as this sanctuary exists in support of the insurgents they will maintain the ability to recruit, train, organize, and launch attacks into Afghanistan. These attacks will continue to mitigate and in most cases prevent independent civilian operations in support of reconstruction. A quick comparison of the maps provided on pages 3 and 4 clearly show that the areas where there is little to no NGO presence are predominately the Pashtun dominated areas. To win in Afghanistan ISAF must have the support of the Pashtun tribe.<sup>41</sup>

Since ISAF has a limited ability to directly affect the sanctuary areas in Pakistan they must transform the border areas through reconstruction. This combined with the extension and legitimatization of the GIRoA and ANSF into the areas will improve security. The insurgents will encounter a transformed environment that no longer provides them resources and support.

The insurgents have increased their targeting of civilian workers because they understand the effects that reconstruction has against them. "Because NGOs have increasingly taken part in development activities, human rights and democratization activities – all repugnant to Taliban and Al Qaeda doctrine – they have been perceived by insurgents as

collaborators with the government.”<sup>42</sup> These attacks have impacted reconstruction and as long as progress in the eyes of the people is not being made then the insurgents remain viable.<sup>43</sup> “Many roads south and east of Kabul are too dangerous for aid workers... there are provinces where they can’t go for a month at a time”<sup>44</sup> “As of March 2008, 162 contractors associated with USAID road programs have been killed and 202 have been injured or disabled in attacks since 2003.”<sup>45</sup> There are more casualties associated with road programs than with any other USAID program in Afghanistan.”<sup>46</sup>

In a recent survey conducted by the Asia Foundation, Afghan’s responded that ‘Rebuilding of the country’ was the most important indicator that their country was headed in the right direction.<sup>47</sup> The Afghan National Development Strategy has integrated the provincial plans into one National Plan for the development of the country. Unfortunately, a single individual or agency has not been tasked to coordinate and implement this plan. This makes the prioritization of resources and efforts across multiple international agencies impossible.<sup>48</sup>

ISAF is at a point in time where small impact projects have reached their potential. ISAF needs to increase efforts in the building of the Big Four projects that will lead to security, economic prosperity and long term stability. The Big Four projects require centralized planning, prioritization, and effective implementation to be successful. In support of ISAF COIN efforts these projects must focus on the areas where the insurgency still enjoys the freedom to operate. These are the high risk areas where USAID implementing partners and NGOs are not able to operate effectively.

## **Recommendations.**

ISAF cannot afford to wait for the security situation to improve enough to support USAID implementing partners and NGO reconstruction in the high threat areas. These areas are dominated by the Pashtun tribe and it is absolutely critical to have them supporting the GIRoA. ISAF should begin the construction of Big Four projects in the high threat areas. A formal reconstruction organization needs to be created that includes representatives from all of the key reconstruction players previously discussed. This organization should have the ability to assign reconstruction projects based on the security conditions in each area. Additionally, this organization should have the authority to approve project nominations, obligate monies, and supervise project construction.

ISAF should transform the road network in Afghanistan from one that is urban focused, weather dependant, and isolated, to a paved system that opens the provinces to internal and external trade.<sup>49</sup> Dams, reservoirs and canals need to be built to combine the use of hydro electric power with agricultural irrigation. Hydro electric power systems should combine with wind/solar and natural gas power as quick sustainable systems focused in both major and rural economic areas. Agricultural conditions need to be transformed from a subsistence based economy to a regional exportation economy. Afghanistan needs an irrigation system built in rural farming areas consisting of irrigation ponds and reservoirs that are supported by a system of lined canals. This will allow the Afghan's to build their water capacity and free them from the current dependence of annual snow melt and rain fall. ISAF needs to build schools in Afghanistan that compete with the Pakistan madrassas. These need to be fully funded, religious based, and offer follow on progression to job markets and college programs.

ISAF should establish a senior “Reconstruction Czar” at the National level that works directly for the Commander of ISAF and is a liaison into the ministerial level of the GIROA. The Czar should have a staff that represents all of the key reconstruction members in Afghanistan (DOS, USAID, Coalition Military, GIROA) and serve as a hub to facilitate NGO integration. The Czar should have subordinate teams under his control at each parliamentary level associated with reconstruction and also with each ISAF Regional Command and PRT. The Czar team would work side by side with Afghan counterparts to implement the Afghan National Development Strategy. They would advise and supervise their Afghan counterparts, just like ISAF currently does with military units. The Czar would be able to task, by approval of the Commander of ISAF, military forces to support or execute reconstruction projects based on the security status of the particular area. The Czar would be able to work with USAID, NGOs, and the international community to task share and focus complimentary capabilities that will create a more effective unity of effort. Of critical importance is the need for this organization to have the authority to “cauterize” the reconstruction system with ultimate oversight on the Afghan National Development Strategy.

ISAF should request an increase to the force level in Afghanistan to address reconstruction in the high threat areas. Dedicating ISAF forces for reconstruction security to protect civilian construction organizations and augmenting combat engineer units with the civilian expertise that will allow them to construct Big Four projects. In addition to combat maneuver forces ISAF should leverage the various NATO forces for their ability to provide engineer units that can contribute to the reconstruction efforts in the high threat areas.

PRTs and ISAF military forces need to continue to maintain the ability to meet the population’s basic needs through quick impact projects and humanitarian assistance. The

PRT must remain the central organization and a tool for the Afghan Governors' for coordinating and supervising the provincial development plan. They should remain under the control of the respective Regional Command yet have the support of the Reconstruction Czar for the execution of province reconstruction plans.

ISAF needs to operate alongside the GIRoA at every level to develop their capacity to fully assume the command, control, and supervision of reconstruction. This must include both formal and informal education at all levels. Reconstruction needs to be complimented by a system of command, control, and execution that meets the needs requested by the GIRoA and allows them to take credit for the project. This will support their legitimization in the eyes of the people.

A program of national employment, similar to the US Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), needs to be started to employ Afghans on the Big Four construction programs. This will reduce unemployment, put money into the hands of Afghans, and teach skill and trade craft.

An aggressive Information campaign needs to compliment the reconstruction efforts especially in the high threat areas. This should be executed through province and district shuras, radio broadcasts, and national level media that reaches cross border to the sanctuary areas. Much is gained by just informing the tribal elders of the reconstruction plan and gaining their input and support. Knowing what their tribal area stands to gain and that they have input in the development is absolutely critical in gaining and maintaining their support.

ISAF needs to acknowledge the importance of the Pashtun tribe on the history of control in Afghanistan and its link to the insurgent sanctuary area in Pakistan. They cannot afford to continue a path of trying to gain security first to create the conditions that will allow

USAID and NGOs to operate in the high threat areas. As long as the sanctuary remains the security will never reach the point to support civilian reconstruction.

The US Military needs to review the current COIN doctrine and address the issue of reconstruction in an environment where civilian organizations either will not or can't operate. Such an environment requires military capability to operate but often exceeds the military's technical ability to conduct major reconstruction. A need exists for an organization along the lines of the US Corps of Engineers. This organization can leverage civilian expertise and technology while maintaining the ability to operate in a high threat area.

#### **Final Remarks.**

USAID and NGOs will argue that ISAF should not assume their role but focus on establishing the security necessary for them to operate. This paper does not advocate that ISAF should, in total, assume the role of USAID and NGOs. It proposes that ISAF should focus them into the areas they can operate and assume their roles and responsibilities in the areas that the security prevents them from operating. Major reconstruction projects focused at the Big Four will ultimately transform the environment and deny the enemy the support of the population. As security improves through this transformation, the conditions will then allow USAID implementing partners and NGOs to enter and operate effectively.

## ENDNOTES

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<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300005p.pdf> (accessed 13 October 2008).
2. David McKiernan, “*Winning in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan*,” Association of the United States Army, Army Magazine, October 2008, 128.
3. The slide below is from my command information brief in Afghanistan and was a product developed by the Brigade and Battalion Commanders of 3d BDE, 10<sup>th</sup> MTN DIV. My battalion formed Task Force Catamount and was an organic battalion to 3d BDE, 10<sup>th</sup> MTN DIV. This shows the COIN Methodology that we began to execute in January 2006.

- **Gain or Maintain Separation of the Enemy from the Population (Clear)**
  - Kill, Capture, Flee or reconcile with Afghan government
  - Combat operations build ANSF capability and credibility
  - Connect ANSF with people
  - Continuous pressure on enemy
  - *Enemy dislocated physically and psychologically*
- **Achieve Effects with the Populace (Hold)**
  - Secure the people
  - Connect IRoA with people through operation ‘1774’
  - Meet needs: MEDCAPs, roads, water, power, schools
  - *Populace convinced their best hope for future lies with IRoA*
- **Transform the Environment (Build)**
  - CF/ANA reduce enemy infrastructure: caches, leadership, safe houses
  - Evolving police capability will bring enduring district-level security
  - Roads facilitate governance, commerce and security
  - Extension of IRoA into previously ungoverned spaces
  - *Enemy returns to a transformed environment, no longer hospitable, his defeat is inevitable*

4. Council on Foreign Relations, “Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2008.” 6. Report to Congress, June 2008.  
<http://www.cfr.org/publication/16699/> (accessed 13 October 2008). Note: According to ISAF, the 10 provinces with the poorest security conditions in 2007 were: Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgun, Zabul, Paktika, Ghazni, Paktya, Kabul, Kapisa, and Kunar. ISAF operates in all of these Provinces.
5. United Nations Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU). “UN Programme Accessibility Map as of 27 September 2007.” Provided upon request by Royce Wiles, [www.areu.org.af](http://www.areu.org.af).



6. Ibid.
7. Ahmed Rashid, "Who's Winning the War on Terror?" 5 September 2003, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=2384> (accessed 17 October 2008)
8. Pashtunwali from Reference.Com: The term "Pakhto" or "Pashto" from which the Pashtuns derive their name is not merely the name of their language, but is synonymous with a pre-Islamic honor code/religion formally known as Pashtunwali (or *Pakhtunwali*). Pashtunwali is believed to have originated millennia ago during pagan times and has, in many ways, fused with Islamic tradition. Pashtunwali governs and regulates nearly all aspects of Pashtun life ranging from tribal affairs to individual "honor" (*nang*) and behavior. Numerous intricate tenets of Pashtunwali influence Pashtun social behavior. One of the better known tenets is *Melmastia*, hospitality and asylum to all guests seeking help. Perceived injustice calls for *Badal*, swift revenge. A popular Pashtun saying, "Revenge is a dish best served cold", was borrowed by the British and popularized in the West. Men are expected to protect *Zan*, *Zar*, *Zameen*, which translates to women, treasure, and land. Some aspects promote peaceful co-existence, such as *Nanawati*, the humble admission of guilt for a wrong committed, which should result in automatic forgiveness from the wronged party. These and other basic precepts of Pashtunwali continue to be followed by many Pashtuns, especially in rural areas.
9. United Nations Security Council. "*Quarterly report to the United Nations on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force*." S/2007/558. 2008. and Council on Foreign Relations, "Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2008." Report to Congress, June 2008. <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/513/89/PDF/N0751389.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed 30 June 2006).
10. North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "*Progress in Afghanistan*." Bucharest Summit, 2-4 April 2008. 13. <http://nato.usmission.gov/dossier/Afghanistan.asp> (accessed 13 October 2008).
11. Council on Foreign Relations, "Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2008." 7. Report to Congress, June 2008. <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/513/89/PDF/N0751389.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed 30 June 2006).
12. Ibid, 7.
13. These were issues commonly related to me by the governmental leaders and tribal elders in Paktika province, Jan 2006 – May 2007. Also see: Asia Foundation. *Afghanistan in 2007: A survey of the Afghan People*. 5-9 and 39-40. <http://asiafoundation.org/publications/pdf/20> (accessed 14 October 2008).

14. Council on Foreign Relations, "Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2008." 7. Report to Congress, June 2008.  
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/513/89/PDF/N0751389.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed 30 June 2006).
15. The Sharona to Orgune road was completed just prior to my unit assuming control in Paktika Province. Once built, this reduced travel time from 12 hours to 4 and increased the economic output along the road an estimated 300% in 10 months. The problem with the road was the US Engineer Task Force improved the road for the most part as it existed near a major stream. Low water crossings were constructed and the gravel improved road was moved out of the stream bed in some sections but not all of them. I routinely drove the road to and from our FOB to meet with the Governor and PRT commander in Sharona. As such, I personally witnessed the impact the road initially had to the local economy and the degradation of the road over time due to weather. This road was a point of reference that many of the tribal elders brought up to me in requesting a similar road within their tribal and village areas. As far as security was concerned, this road was such a source of economic vitality that it became the safest road in the Province with only 2 IEDs in 16 months and zero direct attacks. Our assessment was this improvement to security was caused by tribal influence over insurgent activity (covertly) and most likely the roads economic vitality was recognized by the insurgents as an area that they didn't want to cause a point of friction with the population.
16. United States Government Accountability Office. Report Number GAO-08-689, *Afghanistan Reconstruction: Progress Made in Constructing Roads, but Assessments for Determining Impact and a Sustainable Maintenance Program are Needed*. July 2008. 2.
17. Ibid, 21.
18. United States Agency for International Development, South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy, "Afghanistan Energy Overview,"  
[http://www.sari-energy.org/PageFiles/Countries/Afghanistan\\_Energy\\_Overview.asp](http://www.sari-energy.org/PageFiles/Countries/Afghanistan_Energy_Overview.asp) (accessed 13 October 2008)
19. Council on Foreign Relations, "Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2008." 45. Report to Congress, June 2008.  
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/513/89/PDF/N0751389.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed 30 June 2006).
20. Ibid, 45.
21. Ibid, 47. Also: Afghanistan's agricultural sector accounts for about 45 percent of the nation's GDP and employs more than 70 percent of the work force. Unfortunately, most farmers have failed to advance beyond subsistence farming. Irrigated crop land is in short supply due to an irrigation infrastructure that has been destroyed or degraded. Afghanistan has few dams for harnessing rainwater and spring snowmelt for agricultural use or preventing the damaging seasonal floods which destroy cropland.

22. World Bank, "*Afghanistan: Priorities for Agriculture and Rural Development*," <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/EXTSAREGTOPAGRI/0,,contentMDK:20273762~menuPK:548212~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:452766,00.html> (accessed 13 October 2008)
23. Throughout Afghanistan the farmers exhibit a remarkable ability to move water great distances and often from low to high ground without the aid of pumps or lined canals. They use a system of hand built irrigation ditches to move the water or a system of hand built wells (Kareez) to distribute the water. What was evident to me, during operations in Paktika, Ghazni, Kandahar, and Helmand provinces was that wherever the Afghans moved water they could grow a crop of their choosing. Also see: Council on Foreign Relations, "Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2008." 47. Report to Congress, June 2008. <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/513/89/PDF/N0751389.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed 30 June 2006).
24. United States Agency for International Development, "USAID/Afghanistan Strategy," <http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/Page.CountryOverview.aspx> (accessed 13 October 2008)
25. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Education, "National Education Strategic Plan," *Our Situation Today*, [http://www.moe.gov.af/strategic\\_plans.htm](http://www.moe.gov.af/strategic_plans.htm) (accessed 13 October 2008)
26. Ibid. Also see: Soraya Nelson. "*Schools Aimed to Keep Afghan Boys from Militancy*." <http://www.reuters.com/article/reutersEdge/idUSSP35513220080918?sp=true> (accessed 13 October 2008)
27. David Loyn. "*Bid to transform Afghan madrassas*." *BBC.co*, 11 January 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/7182927.stm> (accessed 13 October 2008)
28. Soraya Nelson. "*Schools Aimed to Keep Afghan Boys from Militancy*." 18 September 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/reutersEdge/idUSSP35513220080918?sp=true> (accessed 13 October 2008)
29. Ibid.
30. Council on Foreign Relations, "Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2008." 42. Report to Congress, June 2008. <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/513/89/PDF/N0751389.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed 30 June 2006).
31. My experience in Afghanistan and also see: North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "*International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Helping to bring security, stability and foster development in Afghanistan*." <http://www.nato.int/issues/isaf/index.html> (accessed 13 October 2008).

32. My experience in Afghanistan working with PRT Sharona and also see: United States Agency for International Development, “Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan,”  
<http://stabilization.developmentgateway.org/uploads/media/stabilization/USG%20interagency%20report.pdf> (accessed 14 October 2008)
33. United States Agency for International Development, “Overview,”  
[http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia\\_near\\_east/countries/afghanistan/](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/countries/afghanistan/) (accessed 13 October 2008)
34. United States Agency for International Development, “USAID/Afghanistan Strategy,”  
<http://afghanistan.usaid.gov/en/Page.CountryOverview.aspx> (accessed 13 October 2008)
35. Robert DeVecchi. Council on Foreign Relations, “*The Role of the Non-Governmental Organizations in Afghanistan’s Recovery.*”  
[http://www.cfr.org/publication/4511/role\\_of\\_the\\_nongovernmental\\_organizations\\_in\\_afghanistans\\_recovery.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/4511/role_of_the_nongovernmental_organizations_in_afghanistans_recovery.html) (accessed 13 October 2008).
36. Ibid.
37. Daniel Byman, et al., “*Strengthening the Partnership: Improving Military Coordination With Relief Agencies and Allies in Humanitarian Operations.*” RAND.
38. Paktika Province is slightly larger than Vermont and shares over 750 kilometers of border with Pakistan – including both North and South Waziristan. There are 27 districts and the population is approximately 800,000.
39. USAID was a complete disappointment for me in Afghanistan. We operated without a USAID representative for 10 out of the 16 months we were there. This was actually better than past OEF rotations as USAID did not provide a permanent representative to Paktika until late into our rotation, fall of 2006. Although our USAID representative was exceptional (I would say he was the best in Afghanistan) he struggled with securing implementing partners and AID monies for Paktika due to the UNAMA security classification of the Province which defined Paktika as a high or extreme risk area.
40. The slide below captures the reconstruction efforts in Paktika Province from approximately 2003 to May of 2007. There was a lack of accurate data during the period of 2003-2005. This slide shows the major areas of focus for projects and includes the PRT, TF Engineer, and USAID projects – along with my battalions contributions. The impact of all of this activity on the local economy was significant. Contracts required the hiring of people from the area. As of May 2007- There were \$68.9 Million Dollars worth of projects on going or about to begin in Paktika. A major portion of these were gravel improved cross-country roads but includes the Sharona-Orgune paved road (\$18.5M) that we succeeded in securing monies for during the spring of 2007. The serious CMO effort in Paktika started under 1-508<sup>th</sup> in OEFVI. Most of the numbers in the Pre-’06 column can be attributed directly to them. They emphasized the importance

of the CMO effort in the AO and my battalion continued it aggressively in the OEFVII-VIII timeframe. The Sharona PRT also became a major contributor during this time and coordination between the maneuver units and the PRT was tremendously successful.

## TEAM PAKTIKA OPERATIONS

FEB 06 – APR 07

Pre '06: \$6.5M  
OEFVII: \$8.5M  
Ongoing: \$68.9M  
Identified: \$29.4M

CMO ACTIVITY	Pre '06	OEFVII	ONGOING/ID'd
COBBLESTONE	5	13	4/2
X-C ROAD	35KM	95 KM	370 KM/70KM
SOLAR LIGHT	105	225	135/120
SCHOOL	28	17	16/3
MADRASSA	0	5	3/3
MOSQUE	2	5	7/4
DISTRICT CENTER	2	6	18/1
CLINIC/HOSPITAL	5	12	5/1
ANSF FACILITIES	9	7	25/6

41. This is my opinion but based on the historical influence that the Pashtun's have had on the governance of Afghanistan. The Pashtun tribal influence extends into the ungoverned Federal Administered Tribal Area (FATA) in Pakistan and as I discuss in the body of the paper this is the key sanctuary area for the insurgency that enjoys support through the Pashtun tribe in certain areas of Afghanistan. To win in Afghanistan we must have the popular support of the Pashtun tribe among all others as they have the largest population base, control the FATA, and maintain the capability to sustain the insurgency.
42. Global Policy Forum, Integrated Regional Information Networks, "*Afghanistan: NGOs Question New Government Directive on Armed Escorts*," <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2007/0802escorts.htm>
43. Allistair Scrutton. "Attacks on aid challenge Afghan reconstruction." *NPR.org*, 3 October 2007, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=14863390> (accessed 13 October 2008)
44. Ibid.
45. David Roscoe. "Army Engineers Work to Connect Afghanistan One Road at a Time." *defenseink.mil*, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=47053> (accessed 13 October 2008)

46. United States Government Accountability Office. Report Number GAO-08-689, *Afghanistan Reconstruction: Progress Made in Constructing Roads, but Assessments for Determining Impact and a Sustainable Maintenance Program are Needed*. July 2008. 22.
47. Asia Foundation. *Afghanistan in 2007: A survey of the Afghan People*. 5. <http://asiafoundation.org/publications/pdf/20> (accessed 14 October 2008).
48. United Nations Security Council. "Quarterly report to the United Nations on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force." S/2007/558. 2008. 9. <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/513/89/PDF/N0751389.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed 30 June 2006).
49. United States Government Accountability Office. Report Number GAO-08-689, *Afghanistan Reconstruction: Progress Made in Constructing Roads, but Assessments for Determining Impact and a Sustainable Maintenance Program are Needed*. July 2008. 8, 12. Afghanistan's estimated requirement for provincial roads calls for almost 34,000 kilometers and for rural roads about 88,000 kilometers for a total of 122,000 kilometers. Since 2002 about 2,700 kilometers of regional and highway roads have been completed but information is incomplete on the amount of provincial and rural road completion. In comparison, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the state of Texas (Afghanistan is almost the size of Texas) has over 484,000 kilometers of predominately all weather roads.

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